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MAKE CHRISTMAS MORNING MORE BACON-Y

APPLE PANCAKE WITH BACON: THE PERFECT BREAKFAST FOR A DAY OF CONSUMPTION **PAGE 14**



Magnotta guilty on all charges

Jury hands down first-degree murder sentence, rejects not-criminally-responsible defence **PAGE 3**

Happy holidays, Ottawa!

We're taking Christmas off, but pick up our Boxing Day edition, a special look ahead at 2015



GUESS WHO'S COMING

Actor, singer and dancer Billie Piper, who portrays fan favourite Dr. Who companion Rose Tyler and is now in the cast of Showtime horror series Penny Dreadful, will be a guest of honour at Ottawa Comicon, organizers announced. The May 8-to-10 comic convention is pitching a Christmas discount on tickets bought by Dec. 31. For more information go to ottawacomicon.com. BBC/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

LeBreton Flats rink pitch on way: Sens

Downtown arena. Interested parties have until Jan. 7, 2015, to submit proposals to National Capital Commission



TREVOR GREENWAY
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Stittsville Councillor Shad Qadri really hopes the Ottawa Senators don't move downtown.

The team announced Tuesday it will submit a proposal to the National Capital Commission to build an NHL arena at LeBreton Flats and while such a move would be welcomed by many downtown, the feel-

ing isn't mutual in the city's west end.

"The Sens have been good for the west-end economy and hopefully they will stay and continue to be that benefit to the west end," said Qadri.

He agreed filling out an application and actually moving are two different things and a relocation wouldn't happen for years. But even the prospect of the team leaving Kanata presents concerns — namely for area businesses that rely on the economic boost of game nights.

Qadri said some businesses predate the team and would be OK, but predicted places such as Napoli's Cafe in Stittsville, which offers meal-and-shuttle packages to games, will likely feel the void.

Kanata South Councillor Allan Hubley isn't panicking yet, as an actual move is likely still a decade away. But he doesn't want to wait before making a plan to fill the potential void, either. Hubley has already started working on reports that will show exactly what kind of effect the loss of the hockey team would have on the area.

"I think it's a very good idea and I have already asked the city's economic development people to review this idea and see what else could be done with that land and what are the impacts to the community? What we have to do is be prepared," Hubley said.

Wherever the Sens end up, Hubley said, he and most west end residents will continue to support their beloved hockey team.

The Sens wouldn't elaborate on their pitch and only confirmed that they would be submitting a proposal to develop the 12.3 hectares up for redevelopment.

Quoted

"The Sens have been good for the west-end economy and hopefully they will stay and continue to be that benefit to the west end."

Stittsville Councillor Shad Qadri



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Jury in Magnotta trial had difficult job, lawyers say

Guilty of murder. Jury asked to peer inside killer's mind, examine gruesome evidence



JOE LOFARO
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Luka Magnotta might have been convicted in the court of public opinion well before his trial started, but Ottawa defence lawyers say the jury had a much harder job than most people might think.

On Tuesday, jurors found the former porn actor and model guilty of first-degree murder in the killing and dismemberment of student Jun Lin.

Magnotta was also convicted of criminally harassing Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other members of Parliament, mailing obscene and indecent material, committing an indignity to a body and publishing obscene materials.

Magnotta admitted at the start of the trial that he did it, but his lawyer asked that he be found not criminally responsible (NCR) for reasons of mental illness. The verdict means the jury accepted evidence showing he had planned the murder in advance and was

of sound mind when he committed the act in his Montreal apartment in May 2012.

Following the case from Ottawa, defence lawyer Michael Spratt said he wasn't surprised deliberations took eight days.

"The jury was asked to look inside Mr. Magnotta's mind and determine what his mental state was and what his thought process was during the time of the offence, and that is one of the hardest things you can ask a jury to do," said Spratt.

Ottawa lawyer Leo Rusomanno said the case was "unsurpassed" in terms of the graphic nature of the crimes.

"It's hard to fathom something more brutal," he said.

Magnotta now faces life in prison rather than a psychiatric facility, with no chance of parole for 25 years.

Even though Magnotta was convicted of "serious and heinous" crimes, said Spratt, the courts send criminals to prison to separate them from society, denounce their acts and rehabilitate them — not to see them "rot and seek vengeance."

"I don't know if he had serious mental issues (or) if he's just a very bad person.... One can only hope that over his lifetime in custody he'll be able to receive treatment to assist him with that."

WITH FILES FROM TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Luka Rocco Magnotta is pictured in Berlin in a court photo. Magnotta was found guilty on Tuesday of first-degree murder and four other charges in the killing and dismemberment of Jun Lin in 2012. CONTRIBUTED/THE CANADIAN PRESS

NCR NO GET-OUT-OF-JAIL-FREE CARD



LORNE GOLDSTEIN
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Luka Magnotta (born Eric Clinton Kirk Newman) was found guilty of first-degree murder in Montreal on Tuesday in a bewildering and horrific case.

Magnotta's counsel put forward the Not Criminally Responsible (NCR) defence provided by section 16 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

The jury was out for a nearly unprecedented eight days of deliberation. There was clearly a lot for them to think about.

The law states, "No person is criminally responsible for an act committed or an omission made while suffering from a mental disorder that rendered the person incapable of appreciating the nature and quality of the act or omission or of knowing that it was wrong."

Thanks to television and movies, many people think this is an easy defence put forward often and with great success. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The defence is very difficult to support. It requires psychiatric evidence, and the psychiatrists who make the NCR assessment are very live to the possibility of manipulation by the accused. Generally the doctors look for a history of

mental disorder as proven by external corroboration with previous diagnoses. Doctors hate relying on the patient's word alone.

As a result, the NCR defence is rarely on the table and even more rarely succeeds.

Obviously there is a lot of attention to the rare instances when it does work, but overall, the defence fails unless both the prosecution and counsel for the accused

have confirmatory psychiatric evidence.

It is important, in the light of the Magnotta conviction, to remember the NCR provisions of the Code exist for a legitimate reason. This conviction proves the NCR provisions are not a get-out-of-jail-free card.

LORNE GOLDSTEIN IS A PARTNER AT ABERGEL GOLDSTEIN & PARTNERS, A CERTIFIED SPECIALIST IN CRIMINAL LAW AND A PART-TIME PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA.

Season of giving

Shelters, restos to offer up free Christmas dinner

A number of locations are offering up free meals this Christmas so needy families and individuals don't go hungry and have a place to be with others.

The Ottawa Mission is serving a turkey dinner from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Spokesperson Shirley Roy said 40 to 50 kitchen volunteers are expected to prepare 1,100 to 1,200 meals Thursday.

There are already about 250 residents staying at the Waller Street shelter who are expected to remain there through the holiday, she said. Mayor Jim Watson and

Coun. Mathieu Fleury are expected to don their aprons on Thursday at The Shepherds of Good Hope.

Anna Silverman, executive director of the Shepherds of Good Hope Foundation, said meals will be served starting from 11:30 a.m. for anyone seeking good company as well as good food.

"People that live on their own will often come and join

us for Christmas lunch so they don't have to be alone on Christmas," she said.

The Salvation Army's Booth Centre on George Street will also serve free meals at 8 a.m. and again at 3 p.m.

Other locations serving free, hot meals include the Heart and Crown on Clarence Street and the Carleton Tavern on Armstrong Street.

JOE LOFARO/METRO



The Ottawa Mission on Waller Street expects to serve close to 1,200 meals on Christmas Day. JOE LOFARO/METRO

1 NEWS

1980s

Police charge ex-school bus driver with sex offences

A former Ottawa school bus driver was charged with historical sex offences after a woman filed a complaint with police this summer.

The female complainant came forward to Ottawa police in June 2014 alleging she was sexually assaulted when she

was approximately 10 years old in the 1980s.

The Ottawa police sexual assault and child abuse section investigated the complaint and charged Andrew Davis, 70, with one count of indecent assault on a female and attempted rape, pursuant to the Criminal Code from the 1980s, the police said in a release.

Davis, who was not previously known to police, operated a school bus in the 1990s, according to local authorities.

Police are asking anyone

with information regarding the accused to contact them. They say they are concerned there could be other victims.

Davis is set to appear in court Tuesday for a hearing.

Anyone with information can contact the Ottawa Police Sexual Assault/Child Abuse Unit at 613-236-1222, ext. 5944. Anonymous tips can be submitted by calling Crime Stoppers toll-free at 1-800-222-8477 or downloading the Ottawa police iOS app.

JOE LOFARO/METRO

O-Train expansion

Transit project nears completion

The O-Train Trillium Line Expansion Project is nearing completion, according to a memo from the director of the city's Rail Implementation Office.

As a result service will be offline for up to six days in the third week of February as the finishing touches are completed. **METRO**



Clockwise from top left: MC DIMZ, Ryan Farrell (FRDO), JM Hunt (Jayem) and Eric Dolan (E-Rock) make up the hip-hop group Wotts. CONTRIBUTED

Putting mics, beats where their mouth is

Ottawa hip hop.

Wotts focused on creating an old-school '80s sound with their Dec. 16 release, 'a'

great record. It's fused with raw, tongue-twisting energy all wrapped up in modern funk and R&B jams courtesy of FRDO's slick hands on the bass and guitar.

"a" jogs the memory back to the days of the Walkman — the early '90s when I used to throw on side two of A Tribe Called Quest's Midnight Marauders and jam out to Electric Relaxation. It was that album that made me realize that an inner-city white kid could relate to American hip hop.

The fresh approach to hip-hop beats on "a" does the same for me. That's no accident, according to Jayem.

"One thing that we always promised ourselves when we wrote is that we were going to be true to form and true to ourselves and really not talk about things or front about things that make it seem like we are cooler than we are," added Jayem. No lyrics about selling crack or shooting up a rival gang.

"We really focus on stuff that people within our circle can relate to: university, post-university, finding jobs, girl troubles. Everyday problems that I think a lot of people can relate to, but we are very sarcastic individuals, so a lot of what we say is layered in sarcasm as well."

Wotts just released "a" Dec. 16. They have turned down a few upcoming gigs to fine-tune their live show, but Ottawa should expect big things from this unique hip-hop group in the new year.



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It doesn't take long for listeners to realize that the horn sample on Wotts' opening track Ballin' isn't made by a trumpet at all.

The foursome, made up of lyricists JM Hunt, Eric Dolan (E-Rock), multi-instrumentalist Ryan Farrell (FRDO) and beatboxer MC DIMZ, just released their first EP "a" and it's hard to believe the entire album doesn't feature one single digital beat.

Everything from the horns, snares and drum kits to the realistic vinyl scratches are made from MC DIMZ's pucker lips.

"When we started playing around with things a little more seriously and saw how beatboxing also seemed to work with the instrumentation, we thought that it was just something very different," said Hunt, who is known as Jayem on stage.

"It's a combination of that old-school '80s sound that we really love, but with something different and more contemporary in style."

Listeners don't have to wait long to get sucked into this

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B.C. Supreme Court. Sex assault suit against ex-Olympic CEO dropped

A woman who filed a lawsuit alleging former Olympic CEO John Furlong sexually abused her while he was a teacher in Burns Lake, B.C., has dropped the court action.

Beverly Abraham's lawsuit against Furlong was dismissed in B.C. Supreme Court on Friday with no costs to either party, after she asked the court to allow her to withdraw the suit.

Abraham says three of her family members have died recently, including her brother who was like a "twin" to her, and she couldn't handle the stress of the lawsuit on top of her grief.

"A lot was just really heavy on my shoulders. I was going through a lot of stress with this," she said.

She says she decided that pulling the lawsuit was the best option for her to move on with her life, after consulting with hereditary chiefs from



John Furlong THE CANADIAN PRESS

her First Nation.

"I am relieved. It's just like — you know, when something weighs you down and it's just thousands and thousands of pounds laying on your shoulders — it lifted me up," she said.

A statement from Furlong's lawyer said he has always maintained the allegations from Abraham and two other accusers are false, and an RCMP investigation has also concluded Abraham's allegations are not supported. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fond-du-Lac. Mountie facing child porn charges

A Mountie posted in a remote fly-in community in northern Saskatchewan has been charged with accessing and possessing child pornography.

RCMP said they began investigating the officer stationed in Fond-du-Lac in September.

Staff Sgt. Ron Weir with the province's Internet Exploitation Unit said officers had been conducting an internal police investigation into file sharing and were tracing IP addresses when they identified the fellow Mountie as a suspect.

Const. Aiden Arthur Pratchett, 31, joined the force

in 2010 and served in the town of Porcupine Plain before he was transferred to Fond-du-Lac.

Personal computer devices were seized from his home in the northern community in October and he was removed from the northern community and suspended with pay.

He was arrested and charged Monday and released from custody on the conditions that he have no Internet access, not possess data storage devices and stay away from children. He is to appear in court on Jan. 28. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Glasgow, Scotland

Couple with ties to Canada killed

British media reports say a couple with ties to Canada — and their teenaged granddaughter — were among the six people killed by an out-of-control truck in Glasgow, Scotland.

Reports say Jack Sweeney, 68, his wife Lorraine, 69, and their teen granddaughter Erin McQuade were killed. Media reports identified Jack Sweeney as a former president of the Bramalea Celtic Club in Brampton, Ont. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Les Coteaux

Three dead in fire at Quebec building

A man and woman and one of their children died on Tuesday after an early-morning fire at an apartment building southwest of Montreal.

Quebec provincial police said the man was 37 and the woman 32, while the child was under 10.

The couple's two other children were seriously injured in the blaze in Les Coteaux and were transported to hospital in Montreal.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Marking a century since Christmas truce

The Parliament Buildings in Ottawa are shown with Christmas lights on Monday. Dr. Andrea McCrady, who is the Dominion Carillonneur, will be among 11 countries' carillonners playing Silent Night on Dec. 24 to mark the 100th anniversary of the Christmas truce during the war. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian listeriosis may be linked to U.S.

Caramel apples.

Officials investigating whether candy treats linked to a Listeria outbreak south of the border may have been imported to Canada

Canadian officials are investigating whether caramel apples potentially linked to a Listeria outbreak in the U.S. may have been imported into Canada.

The Public Health Agency of Canada says there are two cases of listeriosis — one in Ontario and one in Manitoba — with the same genetic fingerprint seen in the U.S. investigation.

The agency says the status of these individuals is currently unknown, and they're looking to determine if they ate packaged caramel apples imported from the U.S.

Based on information related to the investigation, the agency said the risk to Canadians is low.

Fatalities

Listeriosis contributed to four of the deaths.

- A fifth person who died had a strain of Listeria linked to the caramel apples, but health officials do not think listeriosis caused that person's death.

Listeria can cause a serious, life-threatening illness, with

severe symptoms that may include headache, poor coordination, seizures and neck stiffness. In the milder form of the disease, symptoms may include fever, muscle aches, nausea and diarrhea.

In the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed that a California woman whose death was linked to packaged caramel apples was sickened with the same strains of the bacterial illness Listeria that infected 28 others in 10 states.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hard to respond to Sony cyberattack: Baird

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird says the world is grappling with how to respond to a cyberattack crippling Sony Pictures and which the United States blames on North Korea.

North Korea's Internet was up and running Tuesday after a 10-hour shutdown following the United States' vow of a response for the Sony attack, which saw the en-

tertainment company's private data leaked online and threats made against it connected to an upcoming film.

But Baird was unclear about what could be done to respond to future provocations.

"We're grappling with how you do that. This is the challenge. You've got a country like North Korea, (which) is so isolated — and now that the world allowed them to ac-

quire nuclear weapons, it's a challenge on how you tackle it," Baird told Ottawa radio station CFRA.

North Korea denies responsibility for the Sony attack but has called it a "righteous deed" because the company's new comedy film, *The Interview*, depicts the assassination of its authoritarian leader, Kim Jong Un.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Select theatres

The *Interview* was put back into theatres Tuesday when Sony Pictures Entertainment announced a limited Christmas Day release for the comedy that provoked an international incident with North Korea.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Volatile east

151 Taliban dead in 12-day fight: Afghan official

At least 151 Taliban fighters have been killed by government forces during 12 days of fighting in the volatile east, near the border with Pakistan, the police chief of Kunar province said

Tuesday.

Gen. Abdul Habib Sayedkhaili said at least another 100 insurgents were wounded in the fighting in Dogram district.

He said the Pakistani Taliban and Lashkar-i-Taiba — the group responsible for the attacks on Mumbai in 2008 in which more than 160 people were killed — were also taking part in the battle. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Ahead of elections

Israel pumps millions into West Bank settlements

Israel's outgoing government is pumping millions of dollars into Jewish settlements in the West Bank for public buildings and roads ahead of national elections, an

official said Tuesday, in what opponents view as a political ploy aimed at gaining favour with hard-line voters.

The official said the spending spree had been held up by former Finance Minister Yair Lapid of the centrist Yesh Atid party, who was fired early this month in a move that helped trigger the early election. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Brain-dead, pregnant

Doctors say woman should be taken off life support

Irish doctors who have been keeping a brain-dead pregnant woman on life support in hope of saving her 17-week-old fetus pleaded in court Tuesday to be permitted to turn off the machines

because their treatment was becoming horrific and could not end in a successful birth.

Dublin High Court heard harrowing testimony from seven doctors, the woman's partner and father in a case that has reignited debate over the inadequacy of abortion law in Ireland, a predominantly Catholic country with a constitution that gives the fetus an equal right to life.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. might lift ban on gay blood donors

31-year-old policy.

FDA favours new policy barring donations from men who have had gay sex in the previous year

American Medical Association, say the policy is no longer supported by science, given advances in HIV testing. Gay activists say the lifetime ban is discriminatory and perpetuates negative stereotypes of homosexual men.

The agency will recommend the switch in draft guidelines early next year and move to finalize them after taking comments from the public, FDA officials. FDA Deputy Director Dr. Peter Parks declined to give a time frame for completing the process but said, "we commit to working as quickly as possible on this issue."

All blood donations are screened for HIV; however, the test only detects the virus after it's been in the bloodstream about 10 days. That allows a brief window when the virus that causes AIDS can go undetected. According to government figures, men who have had sex with other men represent about two per cent of the U.S. population, yet account for at least 62 per cent of all new HIV infections in the U.S.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. health officials are recommending an end to America's lifetime ban on blood donations from gay and bisexual men, a 31-year-old policy that many medical groups and gay activists say is no longer justified.

The Food and Drug Administration said Tuesday it favours replacing the blanket ban with a new policy barring donations from men who have had gay sex in the previous year. FDA officials said that policy is supported by research and would put the U.S. in line with other countries including Australia, Japan and Britain.

The lifetime ban dates from the early years of the AIDS crisis and was intended to protect the blood supply from what was a then little-understood disease. But many medical groups, including the



Sony announces limited theatrical release of The Interview

A large poster advertising the movie The Interview hangs on the back wall of the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema Tuesday in Houston. Sony Pictures Entertainment announced Tuesday a limited theatrical release of The Interview beginning Thursday, putting back into the theatres the comedy that prompted an international incident with North Korea and outrage over its cancelled release. **PAT SULLIVAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Sri Lanka. Floods, mudslides kill 3, displace thousands

Three people died and more than 60,000 had to be evacuated to safer locations due to floods and mudslides caused by heavy rains around Sri Lanka, officials said Tuesday.

The Disaster Management Center said that three days of heavy rain in 15 districts also injured two persons and destroyed about

1,900 homes.

Hospitals and government offices were inundated and some inmates of a prison were transferred to other facilities.

It is monsoon season in some parts of Sri Lanka, but many other areas not normally affected are also experiencing non-seasonal rain. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Milwaukee. Officer not charged, family looks to feds

The family of a Milwaukee man who was fatally shot by a city police officer say they aren't giving up hope that the officer will be charged.

Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm announced Monday that former officer Christopher Manney, who is white, acted in self-defence when he killed Dontre Hamilton, who was black. But

later in the day, U.S. Attorney James Santelle announced that the Department of Justice, his office and the FBI will review whether Manney violated federal civil rights laws.

Dontre Hamilton's brother, Nate Hamilton, said the family hopes federal investigators can take a more objective look at the case than Milwaukee authorities. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

290 Syrian cultural sites damaged by civil war



This file photo made on Thursday, May 1, 2014, shows a general view of Crac des Chevaliers, the world's best-preserved medieval Crusader castle, in Syria. **DUSAN VRANIC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Satellite imagery shows that at least 290 cultural heritage sites in Syria have been damaged by the country's civil war, a UN agency said Tuesday.

Syria is home to archaeological treasures that span thousands of years of written history, from the Roman ruins in the desert oasis of Palmyra to the towering Crusader castle known as the Crac des Chevaliers near the Mediterranean coast. The nation's capital, Damascus, is one of the oldest con-

tinually inhabited cities in the world.

It has long been known that Syria's archaeological sites have been looted and its historic buildings damaged since the country's conflict began in March 2011. But the report released Tuesday by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research provides one of the most substantial looks yet at the scope of the problem.

Analyzing 18 different cultural areas using commercially available satellite

imagery, UNITAR determined that 24 sites were totally destroyed. Another 104 sites were severely damaged, 85 moderately damaged and 77 possibly damaged, the report said.

The evidence provides "alarming testimony of the ongoing damage that is happening to Syria's vast cultural heritage," UNITAR said. "National and international efforts for the protection of these areas need to be scaled up in order to save as much as possible of this important

heritage to human-kind."

UNESCO World Heritage sites in Aleppo, Damascus, Palmyra and the Crac des Chevaliers have all sustained major damage, according to UNITAR.

Sites across the country have been exposed to different threats. In some places, shelling and other military activity are responsible for the destruction, while in other places illegal excavations and civilian construction are to blame.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

**DOLLAR**
85.98¢
(+0.05¢)**TSX**
14,594.03 (+161.65)**DOW JONES**
18,024.17 (+64.73)**GOLD**
\$1,178.00 US (-\$1.80)**OIL**
\$57.12 US
(+\$1.86)**NATURAL GAS**
\$3.17 US (+\$0.03)

Potentially lethal

FDA sounds off on caffeine powder

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is building a legal case against companies that sell pure powdered caffeine, attractive to teens for its perceived energy boost. Even a teaspoon of the powder can be lethal — it is equivalent to 25 cups of coffee. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Burn injury reports

Keurig recalling 7M coffee makers

Keurig is recalling seven million single-serve coffee brewing machines sold in the United States and Canada between 2009 and last July because of reports of burn injuries. Keurig says its Mini Plus Brewing Systems can overheat and spray water during brewing. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Experts bet on Boxing Day

Black Friday's impact.

Despite deals in November, Canadians still expected to seek post-Christmas sales

Shopping plans

An online survey commissioned by cash-back shopping site Ebates.ca found that about 40 per cent of Canadians plan to shop on Boxing Day.

- Most shoppers were planning to buy clothing (69 per cent) followed by electronics (63 per cent), said general manager Adrienne Down Coulson.
- When the same question was posed about Black Friday and Cyber Monday in November, the categories were reversed.

Boxing Day has traditionally been a bonanza for bargain hunters, but will earlier Black Friday promotions put a dent in post-Christmas sales in Canada?

Ian Lee, assistant professor with the Sprott School of Business at Ottawa's Carleton University, said while the Black Friday phenomenon has extended the holiday shopping season until the week of Boxing Day, it is not generating net new sales.

"As they introduce and extend these sales, people become more cynical.... I think consumers understand intuitively the Boxing Day week sales are going to be better deals," he said.

Some retailers are already getting a jump on offering end-of-year bargains. Amazon.ca announced plans to feature new Boxing Day deals daily beginning Tuesday until Dec. 29, while Best Buy will launch its Boxing Day sale online on Christmas Eve.

Adrienne Down Coulson,

general manager of cash-back shopping site Ebates.ca, said while participating in Black Friday and Cyber Monday promotions is "much less optional" for Canadian companies today, she doesn't foresee a huge impact on Boxing Day.

"Boxing Day is still one of the biggest shopping days, if not the biggest shopping day, in Canada. So as a retailer, they've got to be aggressive if they're going to compete," she said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS, WITH FILES FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RedFlagDeals

Go to RedFlagDeals.com to find all the biggest Boxing Day deals and flyers!

Boxing Day is coming – and RedFlagDeals.com can help! We've got thousands of deals from hundreds of stores plus all the information you need to save money and make smart, savvy purchases. Visit RedFlagDeals.com before you shop and you'll save more money than you can even imagine.

If you're on the go, download the app at www.redflagdeals.com/info/mobile/

 **RedFlagDeals™**
Where Canadians Save



Gifts of Christmas past

Collector Dianne Adcock carries out three Cabbage Patch Kids from circa 1980 after they received a bath at Babyland General Hospital, the birthplace of Cabbage Patch Kids, in Cleveland, Ga. Thirty years after they sparked a nationwide frenzy, Cabbage Patch Kids still have avid fans. Newer hand-stitched dolls start at about \$225 US, but dolls dating to before the mass-market frenzy can sell for tens of thousands of dollars. **DAVID GOLDMAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

VOICES

TIME TO END CHILD POVERTY

Activist brothers Craig and Marc Kielburger explain that while Canada is a more prosperous country now than ever before, poverty levels have also never been higher

The number of Canadian children who depend on food banks every month could fill 6,200 school buses. And we would need a line of buses stretching almost 300 kilometres long for all the children in this country who live in poverty. Those are staggering figures in a country as wealthy as ours.

Every child on those buses has a different story. There's a boy whose single mother works two jobs, struggling just to pay the bills in East Vancouver. A child of an immigrant family in Toronto's Regent Park, who came here with nothing. A girl on the Attawapiskat First Nations reserve in northern Ontario, living in a tiny house with no heat or clean water, and who only just got a proper school this year.

The rate of child poverty in Canada has in-

creased since 1989 when our federal government voted unanimously to wipe it out by 2000. Twenty-five years later, more than 1.3 million Canadian children live below the poverty line.

The number of Canadians who rely on food banks grows every year. Almost 100 First Nations communities face drinking water advisories, and as many as 48 communities still lack a school. In the north, we've seen three families crammed into a small house, sleeping shoulder to shoulder on the floor. The same is often true of new immigrant families who arrive in our urban centres and share tiny apartments.

Our country has seen extraordinary economic growth, and at the same time deepening inequality.

If we believe every Canadian child deserves

the same fair chance to thrive, we need to ask how we give them that.

From Ecuador to India, in our international work we find that fighting child poverty is mostly about meeting families' most basic needs like food, clean water and education. Those challenges exist here. But in Canada, the problem is more complex than simply building a school, or putting food on the table.

In part, it's about empowering people to change their own lives.

Given the opportunity and the tools, young Canadians in low-income communities have an incredible capacity to make positive change—for themselves, their families and their neighbours. We've learned that working with youth in urban neighbourhoods like Toronto's Regent

Park, and with aboriginal youth in our Sacred Circle program. When young Canadians in these communities take on a service project—tackling issues like drug abuse or youth suicide—in the process of helping others they help themselves. Still, as Canadians we need to ask ourselves, what kind of country do we want to live in? Do we want a Canada where every child has the opportunity to succeed? If so, it's time to come up with a plan that will fulfil the promise we made 25 years ago to end child poverty.

Brothers Craig and Marc Kielburger founded a platform for social change that includes the international charity Free The Children, the social enterprise Me to We and the youth empowerment movement We Day.

We asked you:

What's the nicest thing a stranger has ever done for you?*

Just in time for Christmas, we asked people from around the country to share their stories of random acts of kindness:



**Andrea Juby,
Vancouver**

While I was looking for a new apartment this fall, my current building manager—who was a stranger to me at the time—offered to hold a beautiful light-filled studio for a whole month until I was ready to move in. She said, "We don't want to bankrupt you before Christmas!" I walked away on air; I was so moved. That immense kindness created a real sense of home for me. I am so grateful to her and I look forward to my opportunity to pay that kindness forward.



**Ena Goquiolay,
Calgary**

When my family and I migrated to Canada in 2001, we didn't know anybody. A newly immigrated Filipino family, who my parents only knew by referral from mutual friends back home, picked us up from the airport and offered us a room in their small apartment until my parents could find a basement to rent. They drove us to government offices and garage sales. Their kids lent us their toys and showed us around the neighbourhood. Fourteen years later, we consider these once strangers part of our family.



**Brittney Skrypec,
Winnipeg**

I went to (a coffee shop) to get gift cards for work, and the barista asked me if I was getting anything. I said no and she told me not to worry about it. "It's on us," she said. I'm glad I got it for free, it was so nice of her! Now every time I see her, I think of that time she made my day.



**Renata Tracy,
Toronto ***

Someone—their name was Aris—once rode their bike from Montreal to Toronto to see me for one day.

Editor's note: Aris was not a stranger to Renata. That probably would have been creepy. There was a misunderstanding in Toronto about which question to ask, but this answer was so nice we thought we'd use it anyway :)



**Stephen Freedman,
Ottawa**

I asked a stranger for help once when my phone died. He was kind enough to let me use my phone to call my mom. She was supposed to pick me up and I was supposed to tell her where. I was downtown. There would have been a lot of confusion if I didn't call.



**Qian Giang,
Halifax**

I crossed Spring Garden and just lost my (wallet) and another person helped me pick up my (wallet) and return to me.

Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON
THE WORLD OF
CELEBRITIES

Amy Adams GETTY IMAGES

Amy Adams on the outs with Today over Sony scandal

It was just supposed to be a simple morning talk-show appearance for Amy Adams to promote her latest film, *Big Eyes*, and do a victory lap after her impressive Saturday Night Live hosting duty, but instead we have yet another repercussion of the Sony hacking scandal.

Adams was reportedly in the *Today* show green room, ready to go on the air, when she was told she would be asked to comment on the Sony scandal.

"Amy said she didn't want to contribute to the media coverage of it ... then she was abruptly told that her interview with *Today* was cancelled. She was shocked and upset," a source tells Page Six.

Another source, though, saw her as a bit more than "shocked and upset," claiming that Adams "was angry and acting belligerent, she was yelling at *Today* producers and reduced a young female staffer to tears." Guess

she did learn a thing or two from working with David O. Russell after all.

Probably the most entertaining part of all of this is the NBC spokesperson's statement explaining that "as a news program, the *Today* show doesn't allow guests to put restrictions on interviews."

Oh man. First of all, that's total bull. And second of all, it's so cute that you think of yourself as a news program. Adorable.

Alright, alright, aw shucks! Man wakes from coma thinking he's McConaughey

You think you know what disappointment feels like? Try being the British man who came out of a six-day coma in 2012 thinking he was Matthew McConaughey. "When I went to the toilet I went to look in the mirror and I was shocked because I didn't look like him, I didn't know what I was looking at," British car accident survivor Rory Curtis tells the *Telegraph*. "At times I was in hospital thinking, 'I can't wait to get out of here and back to filming movies.' I was convinced I was him and that I had his good looks as well. I know it

was hopeful thinking, really." Yeah, but just imagine how bummed he'd be if this had happened after McConaughey's Oscar win.

Also, Curtis says he came out of the coma speaking fluent French, a language that he'd never studied and that, to my knowledge, McConaughey doesn't speak either.

"I was sitting there spouting a foreign language from my hospital bed, acting all French in their sort of arrogant yet sophisticated way," he says. Sounds charming.

Breaking! Frozen turned on Emily Blunt's water works

According to Emily Blunt, another adjective that can be applied to Disney's hugely successive animated musical *Frozen* is "labour-inducing." Blunt tells E! News that she watched the film just a day before she and husband John Krasinski welcomed daughter Hazel into the world. "Isn't that crazy? There was nothing on and I was like, 'Do you think this will be good?' And John indulged me and we went to see it," she says. As for when they got to the iconic Let it Go ditty? "I was like, 'I'm about to!'" Blunt remembers. "I'm



Emily Blunt GETTY IMAGES

literally about to let it go." Wait, maybe they shouldn't brag about that.

Berlin fest won't let Fifty Shades wear out welcome

In a move that kind of makes Germany's prestigious Berlinale seem kind of desperate, *Fifty Shades of Grey* will be celebrating its international premiere at the 65th annual edition of the film festival, programmers announced this week. The press release even goes so far as to call the roles of Christian Grey (Jamie Dornan) and Anastasia Steel (Dakota Johnson) "iconic."

Guys, come on. This is soft-core S&M porn originally written as fan fiction for *Twilight*, an already pretty terrible book series.

The festival also announced they'll be screening the film only once, meaning either they're really trying to build up excitement around it or they're secretly embarrassed about screening it at all. I'm going with the latter.



Jamie Dornan GETTY IMAGES



Dakota Johnson GETTY IMAGES

Frozen freezes out Swiftie for top entertainer spot

If you have children, or know someone who does, or just listened to one recently, the choice of Associated Press Entertainer of the Year won't come as much of a shock: It's *Frozen*, and in 2014, we just couldn't let it go.

Although the animated film

opened late in 2013, the story of Elsa, Anna, Olaf, Kristoff and Sven easily outpaced other vote-getters like Sherlock star Benedict Cumberbatch, TV guru Shonda Rimes, musicians Beyoncé and Pharrell Williams, and even an entry for the culture's fixation on the female rear.

In 47 ballots submitted by members and subscribers of the AP, *Frozen* won 12 votes. Taylor Swift had eight. Matthew McConaughey and Jimmy Fallon were tied for third with seven votes each. Voters were asked to consider who had the most influence on entertainment and culture in 2014. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Frozen's Elsa and Anna CONTRIBUTED

Matthew
McConaughey
GETTY IMAGES

Virgo hopes fans come 'along for the ride'

Miniseries. Book of Negroes director talks search for lead actress, challenge of story spanning decades



HALEY RYAN
Metro in Halifax

Clement Virgo wasn't sure he even wanted to read the Book of Negroes.

Virgo, who directed and co-wrote the miniseries of the same name alongside author Lawrence Hill, said it was hard to get past the title before he realized it was referencing a real document that listed the names of black people who helped the British in the Revolutionary War.

"What brought me to the story is the main character, Aminata Diallo," the Canadian director said in an interview from Toronto. "She's a terrific heroine and her voice and her journey really ... made me want to spend four years trying to bring her to the screen."

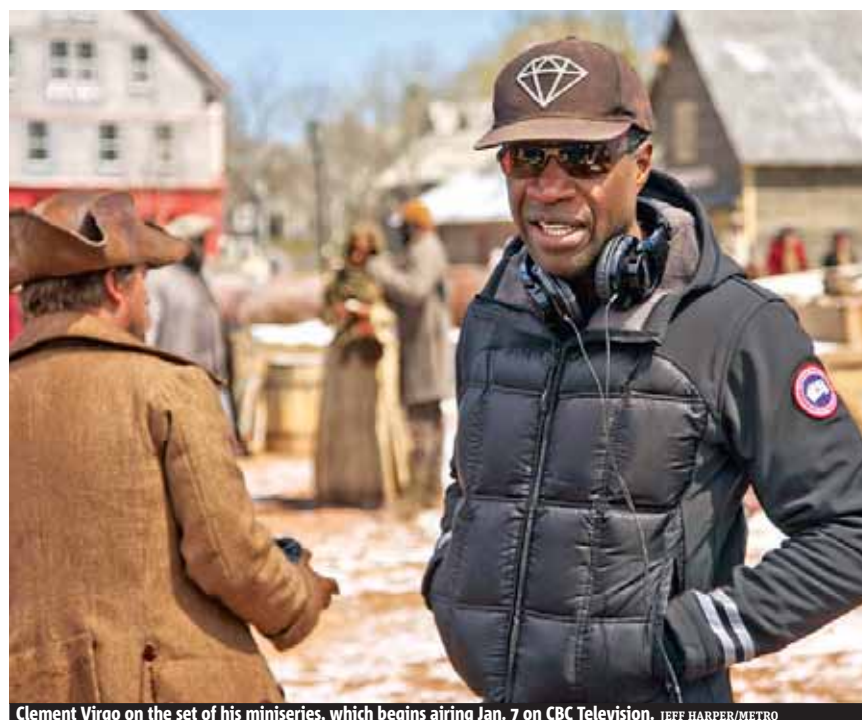
His "number one challenge" was finding someone who had the right acting chops, could embody Aminata's vulnerability and strength while playing both young and old — and he enjoyed spending nearly every scene with, Virgo said.

"Once we found Aunjanue Ellis ... I was quite relieved," he said.

Although the book was released as *Someone Knows My Name* in the United States where there has been a more "turbulent history" around race, Virgo said the miniseries will air as the Book of Negroes on BET and the title should be a "non-issue" once people know its historical roots.

Although the book was originally supposed to be turned into a feature film, Virgo said some of the most "visually interesting" work right now is on TV, and the book's dense material fits better in a miniseries than crammed into a movie.

Working with Hill in adapting the book was easy because he was "not precious" about his novel and



Clement Virgo on the set of his miniseries, which begins airing Jan. 7 on CBC Television. JEFF HARPER/METRO

was open to compressing some aspects of the book while keeping it historically

accurate, Virgo said.

Virgo said he tried to focus on what he felt was

important to the story and making Hill happy, while forgetting about fans of

The reel deal

"It's a very factual story that is moving."

Director Clement Virgo
on *The Book of Negroes*

the book "looking over my shoulder."

"I was just trying to be truthful, and emotionally engaged, and hopefully they'll come along for the ride," he said.

The "genius" of Hill's story is how he thrust a Forrest Gump-like character into the history of slavery, the American Revolution, segregated settlements in Nova Scotia, and the journey back to Africa without it seeming like a lecture, Virgo said.

As Canadians watch the series, Virgo said he hopes they realize no matter where you come from, or who you are, you can overcome anything life throws at you.

"That's what Aminata represents; perseverance and resilience in the face of a lot of hardship," he said.

In theatres Christmas Day

Ratings and synopses courtesy of Rotten Tomatoes. For more movie reviews, trailers and news go to RottenTomatoes.com.

Ratings: Certified Fresh: 🍅 Fresh: 🍅 Rotten: 🍅 Audience response: 🍅 Audience anticipation for the film: +

Mystery & Suspense



The Imitation Game

Director. Morten Tyldum

Stars. Benedict Cumberbatch

During the winter of 1952, British authorities entered the home of mathematician, cryptanalyst and war hero Alan Turing to investigate a burglary. They ended up arresting Turing on charges of 'gross indecency', that would lead to his conviction for the criminal offense of homosexuality — little did officials know they were incriminating the pioneer of computing.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 86% Audience: +98%

Kids/Family



Into the Woods

Director. Sean Anders

Stars. Meryl Streep, Emily Blunt, James Corden

Into the Woods is a modern twist on several of the beloved Brothers Grimm fairy tales, intertwining the plots of a few choice stories and exploring the consequences of the characters' wishes and quests. This humorous and heartfelt musical follows the classic tales of Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk, and Rapunzel.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 71% Audience: +97%

Drama



Big Eyes

Director. Tim Burton

Stars. Amy Adams, Christoph Waltz

Directed and produced by Tim Burton, *Big Eyes* is based on the true story of Walter Keane (Christoph Waltz), who was one of the most successful painters of the 1950s and early 1960s. The artist earned staggering notoriety by revolutionizing the commercialization and accessibility of popular art with his enigmatic paintings of waifs with big eyes.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 72% Audience: +95%

Drama



Unbroken

Director. Angelina Jolie

Stars. Jack O'Connell, Domhnall Gleeson

Academy Award winner Angelina Jolie directs and produces *Unbroken*, following the incredible life of Olympian and war hero Louis "Louie" Zamperini (Jack O'Connell) who, along with two other crewmen, survived in a raft for 47 days after a near-fatal plane crash in the Second World War, only to be caught by the Japanese Navy and sent to a prisoner-of-war camp.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 48% Audience: +96%

Drama



Wild

Director. Jean-Marc Vallée

Stars. Reese Witherspoon, Kevin Rankin

With the dissolution of her marriage and the death of her mother, Cheryl Strayed has lost all hope. After years of reckless, destructive behaviour, she makes a rash decision. With absolutely no experience, driven only by sheer determination, Cheryl hikes more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail, alone.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 88% Audience: +95%

Mystery/Drama



The Gambler

Director. Rupert Wyatt

Stars. Mark Wahlberg

Jim Bennett (Mark Wahlberg) is a risk taker. Both an English professor and a high-stakes gambler, Bennett bets it all when he borrows from a gangster (Michael Kenneth Williams) and offers his own life as collateral. Always one step ahead, Bennett pits his creditor against the operator of a gambling ring (Alvin Ing) and leaves his dysfunctional relationship with his wealthy mother.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 62% Audience: +94%

How-to

Use travel time wisely

1. Use travel time to relax, not to work. Power down and give your brain a break.
2. Load your iPad with that documentary you've been meaning to watch or that video tutorial you haven't had time to wrap your head around.
3. Review a language app of the foreign country you're heading to (quietly, of course). Even 10 simple words and phrases can go a long way — and two of them had better be "please" and "thank you."
4. Is the flight attendant/tour guide handing out local newspapers? Brush up on the news of the day at your destination, so you'll have something to add to the local chit-chat.
5. Never forget this all-important travel rule, whether you're on a plane, train or bus: Sleep when you can.

DOUG WALLACE/METRO

New

Westin facelift at Tremblant

Calling all ski bums: Le Westin Resort & Spa, Tremblant, Que., has recently completed a major reno. All 122 guest rooms have been redone, as has the more than 4,000 square feet of meeting space, the lobby and the front desk, spruced up with a living green wall. Expect natural wood details, earthy colours, warm fabrics and lots of big, big windows. Recharge the batteries, then hit the slopes — and repeat. Visit StarwoodHotels.com.

DOUG WALLACE/METRO



Deal

Escape to Portugal

Beat the winter blahs by heading to the Algarve. Gateways International is offering 14 days in Albufeira, Portugal, including hotel and airfare from Toronto, from \$1,775 (taxes included) for travel between Jan. 1 and March 31. Because this deal is based on availability, you can get a little more flexibility with dates, and with airfare being the bulk of the cost, you could stay an extra week for peanuts if you wanted to. Call 800-268-0900.

DOUG WALLACE/METRO



The hot destinations of 2015

Make a list. Here's a rundown of accessible and fascinating trips to plan next year

See Cuba before it changes. Check out the World Expo in Milan. And if you're heading to New York City to see the view from One World Trade Center's observatory (scheduled to open late spring), take the subway to Queens and see if you can figure out why it topped Lonely Planet's "best in the U.S." destinations for 2015.

Europe

The Milan Expo opens in May for six months and is expected to draw 20 million visitors. The Expo is the modern incarnation of the old World's Fairs that thrilled 19th- and 20th-century guests with new products and technology.

The theme of the Milan Expo is food and nutrition, and dozens of countries are participating. The U.S. will do its part by sending six authentic food trucks to Italy featuring regional American and ethnic fusion menus. Milan's famous opera house, La Scala, normally closed in the summer, will host performances daily during the Expo.

Anniversaries

Singapore celebrates its golden jubilee — 50 years of independence from Great Britain. Vietnam celebrates 70 years since achieving independence from France, and 50 years since the first U.S. combat troops arrived at Da Nang, which some historians say marked the start of the Vietnam War — even though Americans had been sent to the country in prior years.



The One World Trade observatory is expected to open in late spring 2015. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A number of U.S. museums and historic sites will be hosting exhibits and events to mark 150 years since the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the end of the Civil War.

The new year also marks 70 years since the end of Second World War — both the defeat of Nazi Germany and the atomic bombing of Japan that ended the war in Asia. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are planning memorial services on the August anniversaries of the bombings, along with numerous arts projects and peace-themed events throughout the year.

In New Orleans, Aug. 29 will be the 10-year anniversary of the devastation of hurricane Katrina. "Come see the new New Orleans" is the tourist industry mantra for showcasing trendy emerging neighbourhoods and a vibrant restaurant scene.

South Dakota expects crowds for the 50th Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup in September and the 75th



Head over to South Dakota for the Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup in September. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in August.

Cuba

The news that the U.S. intends to normalize relations with Cuba could lead to a rush of travellers hoping to experience the island before it loses its frozen-in-time culture to an onslaught of U.S. chain stores, hotels and tourists. But don't pack your bags

just yet: For the near future, the only way you can legally visit Cuba as an American citizen is to take a "people to people" cultural exchange tour licensed by the U.S. government. The tours are expensive and itineraries are limited.

Theme Parks

Universal Studios Hollywood debuts two new attractions in

New York City

Two big openings take place in the Big Apple in 2015: the observatory at One World Trade in late spring and the new Whitney Museum of American Art in May in Manhattan's Meatpacking District near the High Line and the Hudson River. The city also got a Christmas gift from Lonely Planet, which named the borough of Queens as a "best in the U.S." destination. Manhattan has been giving ground to trendy Brooklyn in recent years, but the elevation of Queens as the next big thing was a bit of a surprise. Not that New Yorkers and tourists alike don't love Queens attractions like the 1964 World's Fair grounds, the hipster beach scene in the Rockaways, Chinatown in Flushing, the Asian and Latin American ethnic mix in Jackson Heights and the emerging industrial-chic ambience of Long Island City. But the borough is not quite on tourist radars yet — though the Lonely Planet pronouncement may change that.

2015: Springfield, an immersive area opening in spring surrounding The Simpsons Ride, and Fast & Furious — Supercharged, a thrill ride opening in summer based on the film series.

Disneyland opens Frozen Fun in January in Anaheim, Calif., with a singalong, Olaf's Snow Fest, and meet-and-greets with Anna and Elsa, among other attractions. The California theme park also celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, with celebration details to be revealed at the end of January.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

How to stop being afraid of the followup

Career. They've said they'd be in touch, but should you give them a shout in the meantime?

LAUREN
MARININGH
TalentEgg.ca

Knowing how to follow up after an interview can be key to determining if you progress on to the next step in the hiring process.

If you're not the most assertive person, you may be afraid to reach out post-interview. Here are some important steps to follow that can help make the process less intimidating.

Organize details

Often job descriptions will outline how or if they would like you to follow up.

Some jobs will state that only qualified applicants will be contacted, and will strictly outline not to follow up. Make sure you make note of these things as you are sending out applications.

Once you have sent out a followup, make sure to make note of a response

Send the right message

Not knowing what to share in a followup message is a common reason for opting out.

- Don't overthink it. If you're following up on an application, keep your message brief and inquire politely about the opportunity you've applied to. Reiterate your interest and ask if there have been any new developments in the hiring process.
- If you're following up on an interview, it's OK to go into more detail. Make sure to share that you appreciated the opportunity to connect, and bring up a few key discussion topics. Close by adding that you look forward to hearing about the hiring process soon.

you receive. This will be crucial in knowing when to follow up again, or knowing the job status.

There is nothing worse than following up when you've already heard that a position is closed.

Follow up with the appropriate person

Just as when you apply for a job, it's important that your followup be directed to the right person.

If you applied to a general HR email, you can try following up to that email, but chances are you won't hear back.

Try to find the person in charge of hiring for that particular position.

If you apply via LinkedIn, often you will be able to see who posted the job, and that will help identify the right person with whom to follow up.

Know the platform

How should you be following up?

If a position specifically states "No phone calls," follow up with an email.

Email is generally a safer and less invasive bet anyway, as it allows for the hiring manager to reply back

in their own time — and avoids creating an awkward situation.

You don't want to catch someone off-guard or annoy them by not following instructions that were clearly laid out in the first place.

If you have a more casual relationship with someone involved in the hiring process (but not the key decision-maker), you may want to consider using a social media platform (like Twitter) to touch base.

Let it be and give it time

There is a fine line between following up and annoying human resources by being too persistent.

You'll definitely be contacted if you are a promising candidate, so imagine your followup as simply a confirmation of interest and an opportunity to (hopefully) gain more information about your application status in the process.

If you don't hear back from the hiring manager, don't take it personally.

While you may be disappointed that your carefully-crafted application didn't get a response, letting go of your disappointment is the only way to move forward.



Refreshing your inbox repeatedly is only going to result in frustration. If the position is taken down and you still haven't heard back after a few weeks, it's safe to say they are not interested. ISTOCK

It's beginning to look a lot like the work blahs



OFFICE SPACE
Eleni Deacon
life@metronews.ca

Dear Metro,

I get extremely sluggish in the winter. It's so hard to get up in the morning—and even once I'm awake, I still feel like I'm asleep. Everything is just so blah. How can I stay focused at work when all I want to do is crawl under a blanket?

— Want 2 Hibernate

Dear W2H,

If only we could eat a bunch of acorns, then curl up in a cute little ball and nap until April. But humans aren't chipmunks. Even in 20-below weather, we've got to haul our tails to work.

Although you want to park yourself under an afghan, don't. Physical activity—even a little bit each day—can radically energize your system. To stay positive at

work, set a few manageable professional resolutions that will boost your performance without stirring up oh-no-I'm-flunking-my-resolutions anxiety. And give yourself something fun to look forward to on a daily basis.

It could be something big, like a vacation. Or something small, like fancy crackers in your lunch.

Winter slowdown is normal, but if your blahs run really blue, consider seeking treatment for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

Health-care professionals can advise on ways to make the dreary months less dark, both at work and in your off-hours.

The weather outside may be frightful, but the next few months don't have to be totally awful.

Dear Metro,

My boss recently lost it on a colleague for mixing up the numbers in a report. Thing is, my colleague had the wrong numbers because of a silly



It's hard to stay happy when the weather is at its worst, but there are ways to curb your curmudgeonliness. ISTOCK

mistake with my calculations. I know I should confess, but I started this job recently and

I don't want to get off on the wrong foot. How can I absolve my co-worker without

hurting my own career?
— Playing Scruples

Dear PS,

Your biggest mistake is not owning up to your mistake. While small slip-ups don't necessarily need admitting, hiding larger missteps could easily make them worse. In this case, size doesn't matter: someone else shouldn't have to take the blame for your blunder.

Find a way to frame your story so you don't come off like the no-shame new guy who stood idle while Peter got screamed at in his stead.

A small but self-serving white lie—"I just noticed an error in my calculations"—could exonerate your colleague while downplaying your cowardice.

Confessing won't be easy, but facing your faults is a sign of professional maturity.

Clear the air and your conscience, then move forward.

Your boss may irritate that you made an anger-worthy gaffe in your first stint on the job. But it would be even worse if he found out you were a liar.

Bacon the icing on baked apple pancake

Christmas brunch.

Bacon-apple upside-down pancake delivers a crowd-pleasing salty caramelized crunch

Like Thanksgiving, Christmas is one of those holidays that requires aroma.

On Thanksgiving, we need the house to smell of turkey and stuffing and sweet potatoes. On Christmas, we need whiffs of indulgent breakfast items, like cinnamon rolls or a bubbling fruit crisp. Or maybe you prefer hash browns and bacon. Those get the job done nicely, too.

This year combine sweet and savoury with this baked pancake inspired by an upside-down cake. For ease, it can partially prepped the night before. To do that, just make the batter as directed in a blender, then refrigerate it overnight in the blender carafe. In the morning, just give it a quick whirl to freshen it, then you're ready to assemble the pancake.

And that's when things get good. You start by frying bacon in a skillet. Once the bacon is crisp, you top it with a layer of thinly sliced apples. Give those a couple minutes to soften, then you add a hefty sprinkle of brown sugar and cinnamon. Finally, you pour on the batter and pop the whole thing in the oven to finish.

When it's done, you overturn the pancake onto a serving platter and cut it into wedges. You may not need to, but there's no harm in dousing the whole thing with maple syrup.

1. Heat the oven to 375 F.

2. In a blender, combine the

This recipe serves 4. MATTHEW MEAD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

milk, egg, oil and vanilla. Blender until smooth.

3. With the blender running on low, sprinkle in the flour, sugar, baking powder and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Stop blending as soon as the mixture is smooth. Set aside.

4. Use an apple corer or melon baller to core the apple, but leave the fruit intact. Set the apple on its side, then cut it into thin round slices. Set aside.

5. Heat a large oven-safe skillet over medium. Add the bacon and cook for 6 to 7 minutes on one side. Spoon out and discard about half of the fat in the pan, then turn the bacon strips to cook on the other side, laying them flat and evenly over the bottom of the pan.

6. Top the bacon with the apple slices, arranging them evenly. Cover the pan and cook for 2 minutes.

7. Mix together the brown sugar, cinnamon and a pinch of salt, then sprinkle the mixture over the apples.

8. Carefully and evenly pour the pancake batter over the apples and bacon. Place the skillet in the oven and bake until lightly browned and cooked through, about 20 minutes.

9. Let the pancake cool for 5 minutes. Use a paring knife to loosen the edges of

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup whole milk
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon canola or vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- Kosher salt
- 1 large apple
- 8 strips bacon
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

the pancake, then overturn a large serving plate over the skillet. Invert the skillet

to release the pancake onto the plate. Cut into wedges.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Sweet Potato and Salmon Hash Bake serves 8. MATTHEW MEAD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nestle salmon and eggs in sweet potato hash

1. Heat the oven to 400 F. Coat a 3- to 4-quart casserole dish with cooking spray.

2. In a large skillet over medium-high, melt the butter. Add the onion and cook for 6

to 8 minutes, or until tender and starting to brown.

3. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, grate the sweet potatoes and Yukon gold potatoes. Alternatively, use the medium grating disc on a food processor to shred the potatoes. Either way, grasp the shredded potatoes a handful at a time to squeeze and discard as much liquid as possible, returning the potatoes to the bowl.

4. To the potatoes, add the onion-butter mixture, roasted

red pepper, capers, thyme and a 1/2 teaspoon each of salt and black pepper. Spoon the mixture into the prepared casserole dish. Bake for 50 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender and the top is golden brown.

5. Top the hash with slices of smoked salmon and either dollops of sour cream or poached eggs, if using. Grate fresh lemon zest over the top, then sprinkle with black pepper and chopped chives. Top with caviar, if desired.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients

- 6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled
- 4 medium Yukon gold potatoes
- 1 cup diced roasted red peppers
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped capers
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 8 ounces smoked salmon
- Sour cream or 8 poached eggs (optional)
- Lemon zest, to serve
- Chopped fresh chives, to serve
- Caviar (optional)

NFL

Chargers' Rivers delivers good news

Chargers quarterback Philip Rivers practised Tuesday and said he's not feeling the effects of back and rib injuries.

Rivers said others in the locker room are feeling more pain than he is, and then added: "I have nothing right now hurting at all."

Rivers declined to confirm or deny reports he has a bulging disc in his back. He's been listed on the injury report as having back and chest injuries.

Rivers sat out two practices last week and then led a dramatic comeback in a 38-35 overtime victory at San Francisco on Saturday night.

The Chargers (9-6) need to win at Kansas City on Sunday to clinch a wild-card berth.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the hot seat



"I don't look at myself as a three-win coach. 'I

know I'm better than that, yet this is where we're at right now."

New York Jets head coach Rex Ryan still carries confidence despite a poor season.

MLB salaries

\$3.8M

The Major League Baseball Players Association said Tuesday the average salary was \$3,818,923, up from \$3,386,212 last year. The 12.78 per cent hike was the biggest since a 12.83 per cent rise from 2000 to 2001.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Girgensons not lacking for love from Latvia

NHL. Second-year Sabre still atop all-star voting thanks to fervent fans in homeland

Zemgus Girgensons feels a little sheepish discussing how fans back home in Latvia have clicked and quadruple-clicked his name so often that he is running away with the NHL all-star Game vote.

The Sabres forward appreciates the overwhelming support he's received from the Baltic nation. And yet the 20-year-old Girgensons doesn't consider himself worthy of being included among the league's elite.

"It's a little bit embarrassing and funny at the same time," Girgensons said, before the Sabres hit the road for a two-game swing that concludes Tuesday at Detroit. "It came out of nowhere. I know people know me back home, but I didn't think it was going to go that far. That's like crazy far."

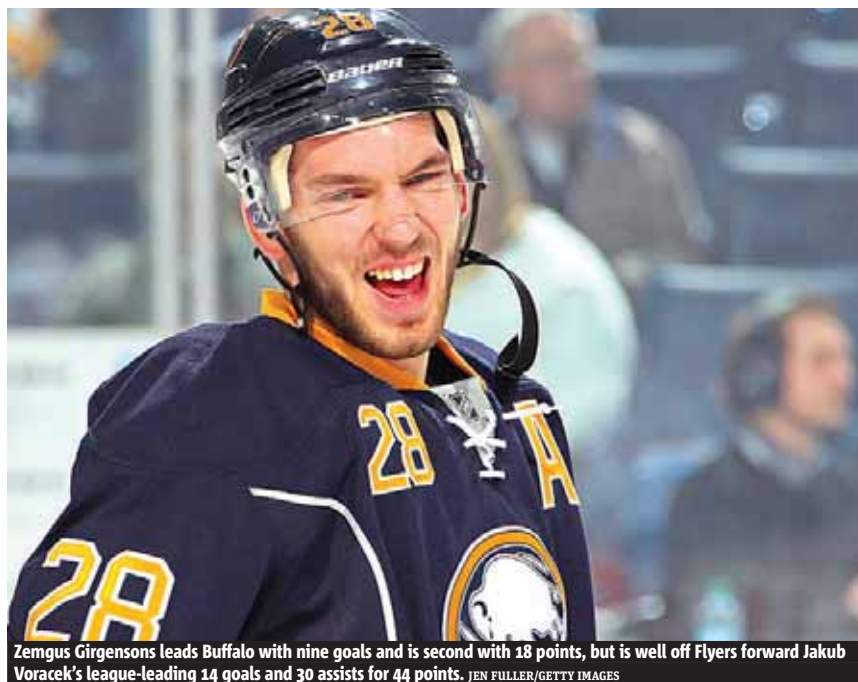
As of Tuesday, Girgensons has a league-leading 1,291,186 votes, with about 80 per cent coming from Latvia.

The only limit on voting is fans can use the same device no more than 10 times a day.

Chicago's Patrick Kane (815,990 votes) is second among forwards, followed by teammate Jonathan Toews (803,034).

Blackhawks players hold down the three other remaining spots eligible to be selected by vote. Chicago's Duncan Keith (790,922) and Brent Seabrook (641,736) lead defencemen, and Corey Crawford (714,471) leads goalies.

With voting set to close Jan.



Zemgus Girgensons leads Buffalo with nine goals and is second with 18 points, but is well off Flyers forward Jakub Voracek's league-leading 14 goals and 30 assists for 44 points. JEN FULLER/GETTY IMAGES

Chicago (near) sweep

Chicago's Patrick Kane (815,990 votes) is second among forwards, followed by teammate Jonathan Toews (803,034).

- The only limit on voting is fans can use the same device no more than 10 times a day.

- Blackhawks players hold down the three other remaining spots eligible to be selected by vote. Chicago's Duncan Keith (790,922) and Brent Seabrook (641,736) lead defencemen, and Corey Crawford (714,471) leads goalies.

1. Girgensons is on the verge of clinching a spot to play in the all-star game at Columbus on Jan. 25.

"If I have to, it's awesome" said Girgensons, the only Lat-

vian currently playing in the NHL. "It'll be satisfaction to the fans, really."

Selected in the first-round of the 2012 draft, Girgensons has established himself as a

skilled two-way forward, and part of the rebuilding team's young core.

Girgensons leads Buffalo (13-18-3) with nine goals and is second with 18 points.

That puts him well off the league-leading pace. Dallas centre Tyler Seguin is first with 25 goals, while Philadelphia's Jakub Voracek tops the points list with 44.

Sabres coach Ted Nolan said Girgensons has nothing to be ashamed of.

"I wouldn't be embarrassed at all," Nolan said. "The whole nation's cheering for him, which is great to see. So he should feel a lot of pride."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Asleep in their beds: Raps rest before West



Raptors centre Jonas Valanciunas reacts to a foul call during Toronto's 129-120 loss to the Bulls in Chicago Monday night. CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Raptors fans can either be pumped up by or face with trepidation the impending post-Christmas road trip that represents the most arduous stretch of the schedule so far by a wide margin.

They can be excited about seeing how the Eastern Conference-leading Raptors fare against some of the top teams in the West, they can be anxious to see if the team can steal a game or two, they can talk about measuring sticks or statement games or what have you.

The players have a more sin-

gular focus in the days leading to the trip: Getting some rest.

Now on their longest time away from the court since training camp began in late September, the next little while is about recuperation and rejuvenation.

"That's going to be good to refresh your mind (and) especially (your) body," said centre Jonas Valanciunas after the Raptors went into the break on the heels of a 129-120 loss to the Chicago Bulls on Monday.

"To lay down a couple of days in a bed, just not do noth-

ing. Refresh your body, refresh your mind and come back on (the) 27th ready to play and win some games."

The Raptors had nothing scheduled Tuesday, Wednesday or Christmas Day, a welcome respite after having played three games in four days.

Most players with families headed back to Toronto after the game in Chicago, some headed to their off-season homes. They don't have anything official until practice Boxing Day in Los Angeles.

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2015 Mazda MX-5

- **Type.** Two-door, rear-wheel-drive compact sports car
- **Engine.** 2.0-litre inline four cylinder (167 hp)
- **Transmissions.** Six-speed manual or automatic
- **Price.** \$29,450 base (GX), \$42,720 as-tested (anniversary edition)

Market position

Debuted in 1989 and continues to stick to original script of providing the most fun-to-drive roadster for the money. The Miata/MX-5 is the best-selling two-seat sports car in history and now has no direct competitors. It is a spiritual successor to traditional low-cost British roadsters, such as the MGB and TR6.

Points

- 2015 Anniversary Edition the last iteration of current generation. An all-new MX-5 is due out next year.
- The U.S. and Canada each received only 100 copies of the Anniversary Edition, which sold out quickly.
- The only exterior colour combination is Soul Red Mica/Brilliant Black — the latter for the retractable hardtop.



The power hardtop roof is slick, but the manual top is easy to use.

Safety features

Stability and traction control, four-wheel disc brakes with anti-lock and electronic brake force distribution, limited slip differential, anti-theft alarm, engine immobilizer theft deterrent, front and side airbags, seat-belt pretensioners with force limiter, side impact door beams, fog lights, Xenon headlights.

Just don't mess with success

PHOTOS: MIKE GOETZ



Review. With a new MX-5 on the horizon, let's hope Mazda sticks with its Miata formula for fun and affordability

MIKE
GOETZ
drive@metronews.ca

Nobody rocks the concept of a fun and affordable two-seat roadster quite like Mazda. Then again, nobody else really tries anymore.

And who could blame them? Why invest in a separate platform, which is hard to share with other vehicles, for a shrinking pool of buyers?

These cars don't exude the prestige they used to in North America and Europe, as crossovers continue their unrelenting path to complete

vehicle domination. And there isn't much demand for them in China and other emerging markets, perhaps defeated by concerns about the weather, traffic and pollution, and a preference among the rich to be chauffeured rather than drive themselves around.

All of which makes the MX-5 even more precious to those of us who still enjoy driving.

From its inception in 1990, the Miata was conceived as a car to provide the most driving joy per dollar, by keeping engine size and power in check, and concentrating on lightness, balance, driver feedback and simplicity.

And although the car was renamed the MX-5 in 2006, Mazda hasn't strayed from the script since, including the all-new 2016 MX-5, which is waiting in the wings.

Compared to most every-



The cabin is tight but cosy, with miniature controls and little storage space.

thing else on the road, the Miata/MX-5 is a small and precise gem. And the 2015 25th-anniversary edition is even more gem-like, with some elegant cosmetic touches, and a knockout Soul Red Micra paint job.

With just 100 anniversary editions available in Canada,

they sold out months ago, but you can still buy the equally impressive 2014 GT model.

The MX-5 offers very light and agile handling. The 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine likes to rev, but takes premium fuel. Its 167 horsepower are not overwhelm-

Compare



1 BMW Z4
Base price: \$56,395
Good looking and powerful, but not visceral.



2 Porsche Boxster
Base price: \$59,685
Good looking and powerful, and very visceral.



3 Nissan 370Z Roadster
Base price: \$51,238
Excellent bits don't seem to add up to an engaging experience.

ing, but everything feels faster when you're this low and connected to the pavement. And the manual gearbox is one of the most satisfying to use in autodom.

The ride is not as stiff as you might expect, because it doesn't need a stiff suspension for handling, but it is a bit noisy on the highway.

The cabin is tight, but cosy, with miniature controls and little storage space. Your legs go straight out, with no bend to the knee.

The optional power hardtop roof is slick, but the manual top is super light and easy to use. The trunk is small but surprisingly useful.

Net result: The MX-5 is one very fine, two-seat, convertible sports car.

5 DRIVE

There's nothing cuckoo about coconut coir

Driving Force. Fibres found between the shell and the nut is used for many things, including soaking up oil spills

JIL MCINTOSH
drive@metronews.ca

By their very nature, cars and trucks present numerous environmental issues, and not just because of what comes out of their tailpipes.

When something goes wrong and fluids leak out of a vehicle, mechanics and emergency responders usually sop up the mess with several different types of absorbent products that can have environmental issues of their own.

"The most common products are made from clay or diatomaceous earth," says Toby Wilson, president of Coco Products, which makes a more environment-friendly product called Coco Absorb from coconut fibre.



Coco Absorb is an environmentally friendly way to clean up fluid spills from vehicles. JIL MCINTOSH

"Clay products are mined out of the ground, and they're not renewable. Plus, clay can catch fire when it comes into contact with vegetable oil and will spontaneously combust. We're seeing a lot more of that with biodiesel.

"And if perlite (a type of soft volcanic glass) comes in

contact with hydrochloric acid, it will create deadly fumes," he adds. "Our product is not reactive to anything out there."

Coco Absorb is made from coconut pith, also known as coir, which is found between the coconut's hard green outer shell and the familiar dark-

brown nut inside. Although it was originally just thrown away, coconut coir is now used in many different ways, including in gardening as a soil amendment or pressed into seedling pots, woven into rope, as insulation and, in some countries, burned as fuel.

It's also used in upholstery. Some auto manufacturers use coir in their seats, and they're experimenting with it as a possible ingredient in lightweight plastics and other materials.

The coir's honeycomb-like structure consists of narrow, hollow cells, which absorb fluids.

Unlike most absorbents, which mainly draw fluids into their outermost layers, the coconut pith uses capillary action to act like a sponge and draw liquids inside. It also holds them there, even as it dries, so it doesn't leach potentially toxic fluids after disposal.

One of coir's best features is that, due to a naturally occurring chemical compound called phenol, it bonds with oil first, and can absorb several times its weight. Once it's completely saturated with oil, it won't absorb water.

Although research is still ongoing, coconut coir could therefore be used to contain and absorb oil spills with minimal environmental damage, sopping up the oil while

Core facts on coir

- Coconut trees don't require chemical fertilizers to grow. Each tree produces as many as 200 coconuts per year, making its fibre a renewable resource.
- Coconut coir can also be mixed with leftover waste paint so that it hardens into a solid that won't leach paint into the environment.
- Coconut-based absorbent is used at Walt Disney World, where it's most commonly used to soak up vomit.

leaving the clean water behind. Even when left there, the oil-soaked coir won't release any of it back into the water.

Coconut coir is also much lighter in weight than clay absorbents, which makes it easier to transport, store, and use.



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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries

March 21 - April 20

Someone will turn to you and you won't let them down. You like few things better than charging to the rescue, especially when backing the underdog against a bully.

♉ Taurus

April 21 - May 21

A colleague will make you an offer you find hard to refuse today, but can you trust them? Find out if it is genuine and, if it is, let them know quickly you want in on the game.

♊ Gemini

May 22 - June 21

There will be some remarkable developments in the final days of the year but conserve your energy. The less you do now the more you will gain later on.

♋ Cancer

June 22 - July 23

Someone will try to pressure you into justifying what you are doing. Do what feels right to you and, if others don't like it, that's just too bad.

♌ Leo

July 24 - Aug. 23

Try to build bridges to people you don't always get along with. Just because you have different outlooks does not mean you cannot be friends.

♍ Virgo

Aug. 24 - Sept. 23

Don't worry if you have fallen out with a loved one. A few days from now you will be the best of friends again, so don't take it personally if they don't seem to care. They do really.

♎ Libra

Sept. 24 - Oct. 23

Make time for family members and make sure they know how much you love them. It won't hurt to be a bit more emotionally expressive.

♏ Scorpio

Oct. 24 - Nov. 22

According to your solar chart this is a good day for doing nothing much, so sit back, relax and let life come to you.

♐ Sagittarius

Nov. 23 - Dec. 21

Deep down you are a big softie and what happens today will prove it. Someone who needs a helping hand will have much to thank you for. It could be the start of a beautiful friendship.

♑ Capricorn

Dec. 22 - Jan. 20

For best results you should try to be on the move today. If you stay in the same place you could miss out on something special. Get moving and see where fate takes you.

♒ Aquarius

Jan. 21 - Feb. 19

Make the most of Mars in your sign to try something new and maybe take a few risks. You have always been the adventurous sort and now you are determined to show you have absolutely no fear.

♓ Pisces

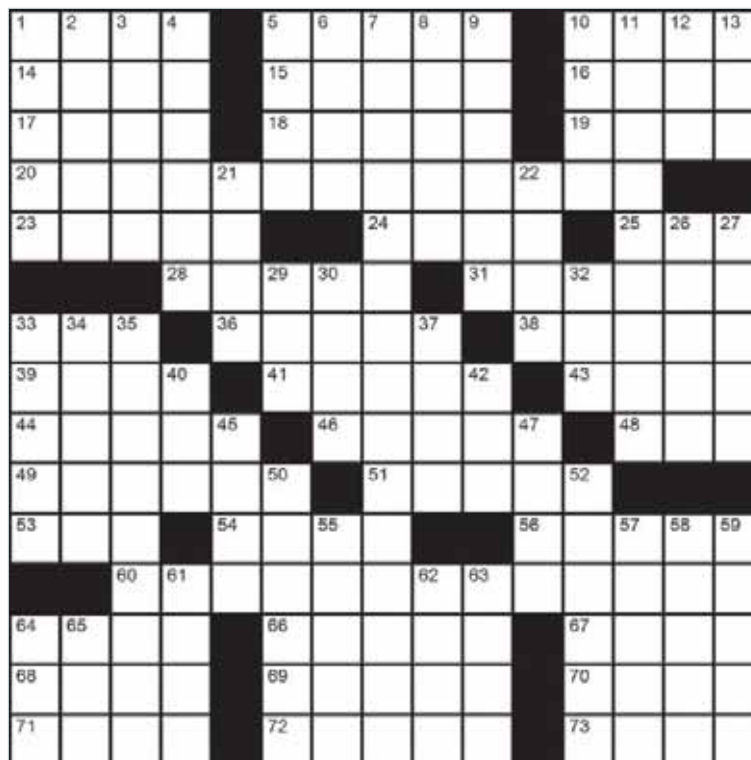
Feb. 20 - March 20

Yake life at a sensible pace, especially if you are hosting friends and family over the holiday period. Don't try to do everything yourself.

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan

Across

1. Herd baby
5. Pointer
10. Hurt
14. Spoken
15. "Silver Bells" bit: "Children laughing / People passing / Meeting ___ after..."
16. Christmastime 'pet'
17. Ms. Suviri
18. Reindeers' sniffers
19. "God ___ Ye Merry, Gentlemen"
20. "On the seventh day of Christmas / My true love gave to me / Seven ___ ..." - Bob & Doug McKenzie, "12 Days of Christmas"
23. "Silent Night": "___ in heavenly peace."
24. "Let It Snow": "But the ___ is so delightful."
25. Mr. Capote, shortly
28. Christmas star
31. Court game
33. Got [abbr.]
36. Rudolph's straps
38. Terre-___ (Newfoundland)
39. "___! The Herald Angels Sing"
41. Principle
43. 'Game' suffix
44. Cookies left for #28-Across, perhaps
46. Tint-to-hair appliers
48. Jr.'s fathers
49. Reindeer crew



Down

51. Threshold
53. Ands: French
54. Bellow!
56. Fragrance
60. Gift disguiser: 2 wds.
64. "___ in a Manger"
66. Bird of Jove

67. Roman emperor
68. Ms. Gilbert
69. Mythological blood
70. Mr. Kringle
71. Religious song
72. ___ (Food packaging meas.)
73. Fully satisfy

Down

1. Free passes, briefly
2. "It's been ___ pleasure."
3. Mr. Bass
4. Snowy droplets
5. ___ other (With-out equals)

6. "___ two minds..."
7. "Jingle Bells": "A day or two ago / I thought I'd take a ride / And soon ___ / Was seated by my side."
8. Fragrant resin

9. Skiing locale
10. Churchyard = God's ___
11. They're roasting in the famous Christmas carol
12. G' days
13. Dine
21. Box
22. Eager
26. Christmastime tune by Joni Mitchell
27. Device operators
29. Mesh
30. Linked
32. Belonging to Omaha's li'l state
33. Providence, ___ Island
34. Jeweller's unit, variantly
35. Wear a toque, scarf, parka and gloves: 2 wds.
37. Visionary
40. ___-i-Noor Diamond
42. Prefix with 'cycle'
45. Evening, in Italy
47. Period of cold weather
50. Corral: 2 wds.
52. "Christmas with the ___" (2004)
55. Speedily
57. Classical show
58. Virtue
59. Came about
61. Mr. Gosling
62. Sugar substitute, Sweet'
63. Actor Mr. Frobe
64. Fireplace stuff
65. Method

Yesterday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at
metronews.ca/answers



Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Yesterday's Sudoku



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